

A Review of Requiem in Utopia, a novel by Richard Starnes

Trident Press, New York 1967

1. General impression of the book: Filth floating in a slop jar.

2. The author is a pig. He continues so obsessed with chucking mud at the CIA windmill (begun years ago when he was with Scripps-Howard) that the story comes off second--or third. First place must go to Mr. Starnes' aggrandizement of his hero, an American newspaper correspondent [who goes to Sweden to mid wife the birth of a Bertrand Russell type peace manifesto. When the hero outwits the stupid CIA crowd (between superman sexual performances) and sets the Agency up for shackles or worse, one begins to feel that Mr. Starnes' hate-CIA press campaign of 1963-1966 may have drained off of a deep-seated psychological pus pocket, which is still draining. The nature of the affliction may have been disclosed in the final melodramatic scene of the book in which the hero's most recent bed-mate hints strongly that he has Freudian complications, and he refers to the "needs of crippled men."

3. The CIA types are overdone fools, perverts, and patsies. All but the Station Chief are double and triple agents, and he is a sadistic moron gimlet-eyeing everybody and everything through Red-tinted glasses. His cover organizations, operational methods and judgments are stupidly childish. (The hero sees through them immediately and confirms his vision in an omnipotent exchange of views with the Chief of the Swedish Services, during which he also tosses off a few out-of-character monologues about the evil Americans who misunderstood the world's--and his--quest for honesty and "peace.")

4. The hero (like the author?) is all set to blast the CIA, seeing it as an uncontrolled, evil power which persecutes him because of the articles he's written against it and the operations he has exposed during a Southeast Asian assignment. He accuses CIA of kidnap, murder, procuring, subverting good guys, covering up for the black hats, and nose-ringing the Foggy Bottom folk. He, of course, has no trouble outwitting it, plans very soon to expose and destroy it.